

DISCLOSURE DIVISION

☒ **WAIVER REQUEST**
☐ **ANSWER**
☐ **RECONSIDERATION REQUEST**
☒ **UNTIMELY**

DATE: 7/2/2021

DOCKET #: 2021-551

Ashley Wimberley, Director
Disclosure Division

FILER INFORMATION

Name: James Russell Fatic
Address: 1009 Oakland Drive, Pearl River, LA 70452
Office/Position: St. Tammany Community Action Agency
of Disclosures/Amendments Filed with Agency: 4
Years Covered: 2017-2020
Final Report: No

REPORT INFORMATION

Name of Report: Tier 2.1 Annual Personal Financial Disclosure covering calendar year 2018
Report ID: PFD21003025
Original Due Date: 5/15/2019
NOD Received: 11/29/2019
NOD Signed by: James/Jim Fatic
PFD/Answer Due Date based on NOD: 12/10/2019
PFD/Answer Filed: 4/12/2021

LATE FEE INFORMATION

Amount of Late Fee: \$1500
Days late from receipt of NOD: 489
Total days late from initial due date: 698
Late Fee Order Received: 3/8/2021
Payment/Waiver Request Due Date: 3/29/2021
Waiver Request Received: 4/14/2021

COMMENTS:

Mr. Fatic he claims he mailed his disclosure in timely. However, he does not have any proof, as he did not mail the PFD with delivery tracking. He leads a long term recovery organization and is busy with recovery efforts due to regional disasters after hurricanes and tornados in Florida, Mississippi, and Alabama. He's had a reduction in staff and his bookkeeper expectantly passed away on 9/28/2019. He was the employee left in the office and had to manage a team of volunteers and a mission's team all working offsite, while trying to replace a bookkeeper. He was struggling to manage. He said his waiver is late because he is a husband, a father of 4 (ages 4-21), and the primary support of his elderly parents in Central Florida. His mother suffers from Pulmonary Fibrosis, Alzheimer's Disease and had emergency heart surgery on 2/16/2020. His 87-year-old father is her primary caregiver, and is struggling to take care of her. He has made 4 trips to Florida since February to assist his parents. He is a full time executive director of the Northshore Disaster Recovery, and since the Covid-19 Pandemic it's been especially hard for this small, local nonprofit to function, with an increased workload. He's a student at the Asbury Theological Seminary working on his Master Degree and school assignments require travel, so from 2/28/2021 to 3/6/2021 he was out of town. He is a candidate to be a clergy with the LA Conference of United Methodist Church, and is the president if the Rotary Club in Slidell. When the NOD, he was selected as the Civic Leader of the 2019 by the Greater New Orleans Alliance of Good Government. Mr. Fatic stated he did not willing avoid filing the PFD, he was merely distracted with all these other duties. He asks the Ethics Board to please waive the fine, as he simply cannot afford it, as he is paying his own seminary tuition, paying college tuition for 2 of his kids, and paying pre-K tuition, all on a non-profit salary.

OTHER LATE FEE INFORMATION

Disclosure Statements:

- Other Outstanding Statements: No
- Other Outstanding Late Fees: No
- Prior Late Fees: No
- Reassessed Late Fees: No

Campaign Finance:

- Outstanding Late Fees: No
- Prior Late Fees: No

James R. Fatic
Executive Director
Northshore Disaster Recovery, Inc.
360 Robert Boulevard
Slidell, Louisiana 70458
985-960-7406 – Cell
Jim@EpworthProject.com

April 12, 2021

Louisiana Board of Ethics
617 North Third Street
LaSalle Building, Suite 10-36
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Subject: Request for Waiving or Reduction of Late Fee

Dear Members of the Louisiana Board of Ethics,

I have been a voting member of the board for the St Tammany Parish *Community Action Agency* since January 2018 and, as such, have been requested to provide financial disclosure information. I recently received notice that I have been assessed a late fee for failure to submit a Personal Financial Disclosure (PFD) form for calendar year 2018. Additionally, with that late fee assessment notice, I was given 20 days from the receipt date of the notice to request a waiver (due by March 29, 2021). Therefore, this waiver request is considered "untimely." **With this letter, I am requesting that you consider reducing or waiving the \$1,500 late fee for these two allegations – 1.) late filing and 2.) untimely waiver request.**

1. LATE FILING/SUBMISSION

I *did* complete and mail my PFD form for 2018 in early 2019 but have no proof. I do not remember the exact date and it was sent standard mail. I did not send it via certified mail, do not have any way to track it, and do not have an eyewitness. I do, however, have a vivid recollection of frantically trying to track down the PFD from 2017 and copying the bulk of the information onto the 2018 form.

However... I *did not* do adequate follow-up with the Board when I received a prompt to (re)submit the PFD in November 2019. The reasons that I did not do so are as follows:

I lead the long-term recovery organization for the "Northshore parishes." After Hurricane Harvey (September 2017) drew much of the available disaster funding and many of the volunteers away from Louisiana and toward Houston, I had to downsize staffing for my volunteer-based organization. We continued to support regional disaster recovery (Hurricane Michael in Florida, northern Alabama tornadoes, Tropical Storm Imelda, Mississippi River

ETHICS BOARD REC'D
APR 14 '21 PM3:32

flooding, etc.) but we were down to a staff of two – me and our part-time bookkeeper, Cynthia. Cynthia had been recently diagnosed with cancer and was undergoing treatments when she suddenly and unexpectedly (at least did not expect it so quickly) passed away on September 28, 2019. I was left as a staff of *one* trying to manage a stream of volunteer workers as well as mission teams going out (predominantly toward the Florida coast) ...and feverishly trying to replace our bookkeeper. I was struggling to keep my head above water and working to do all that I could with the mental resources that the Good Lord bestowed upon me. I obviously did not do enough to make sure that this filing took place.

Therefore, I do believe that I am culpable for not following through and assuring the proper filing of my PFD.

2. UNTIMELY WAIVER REQUEST

Please consider these facts as you graciously contemplate this waiver request:

- a. Not only am I a husband and father of four (ranging in age from 4 to 21), but I am also the primary support for my elderly parents in central Florida. My mother had emergency heart surgery February 16. Additionally, she has ongoing Alzheimer's Disease and Pulmonary Fibrosis. My 87-year-old father is her primary caregiver onsite as she has been recovering over the last two months. He is struggling, so I have been making frequent trips to the Orlando to help with everything from meals and grocery shopping to changing light bulbs and plunging toilets. From February 16 to the present, I have made four trips to help that have entailed a total of 22 days away from home.
- b. I am employed full-time as the executive director of Northshore Disaster Recovery. We do business as "The Epworth Project," hosting volunteers from all around the world. At least, during regular years, we would have volunteers. Over the last year plus, I have been diligently seeking grants, donations, and other funding to cover both overhead expenses and to allow us to continue to help our community through contracted work in lieu of volunteers. COVID has been a challenge all around, but especially for a small, local nonprofit. At the same time, our waiting list of client families in need has grown to more than 600.
- c. I am a graduate seminary student at Asbury Theological Seminary working on a master's in divinity (MDiv) degree. This classwork is both online and in person which requires additional travel to be a part of the classroom setting. From February 28 through March 6, I was on the road or in class.
- d. I am a clergy candidate with the Louisiana Conference of the United Methodist Church. As such, I am expected to participate in special classes and activities as well as to provide additional liturgical support for my church – especially during Holy Week (March 28 through April 4). I am hopeful that my first "official" appointment to a clergy position will occur within the next two to three weeks.
- e. I am the president of the Rotary Club of Slidell. Although considered a service organization, it is also a *social* organization. And, like all social clubs, it has been dramatically impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic. This has required incremental effort to keep the club active and functional.
- f. In addition to these, there are other boards, committees, and groups that I am a part of.

- g. Ironically, around the same time that the original filing was due, I was selected as the Civic Leader of the Year (for 2019) by the Greater New Orleans Alliance for Good Government.

I have dedicated my life to trying to improve the world around me. This filing is for a volunteer board that I do not have to participate in, but I do because I care.

I have not in any way willfully ignored or avoided the filing. I was merely distracted by my other duties. I promise you all ...I am doing to best that I can to be the best person that I can in all the ways that I can.

I made a mistake in not following through with my 2018 filing. I should have.

I also have been distracted over the last two months with trying to add "parent-sitting" to my list of chores. Again, I have never intended to evade, avoid, or ignore. I have failed to have enough working neurons to effectively sustain the workload that I have taken on. Please have compassion, understanding, and leniency.

In conclusion, I humbly ask that you consider at least a reduction in the fee if not a full waiving of the fee. My only income is from my nonprofit employment. There is a reason that they call it a non-profit! Additionally, I am paying for my seminary tuition, providing support to my two college-aged kids, and paying tuition for my pre-kindergarten son. Frankly, I simply cannot afford the fee. I assume that the intent of the fee is to encourage participation in the reporting process, not to discourage participation in public boards. I am relatively new to this process (I received no training or set of expectations) and am just now coming to understand the requirements. I have not been late before and will not be late again.

Thank you for your consideration and understanding. If you need character references, referrals, or any other or further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,



James R. "Jim" Fatic

985-960-7406 - Cell

jim@epworthproject.com

DISCLOSURE OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST

2018 Calendar Year – Jim Fatic

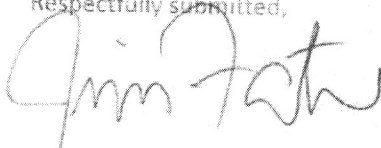
I serve as the Executive Director for Northshore Disaster Recovery, Inc. ("NDRI", a Louisiana 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation that acts as the official, FEMA-recognized Long-term Recovery Organization (LTRO) for St Tammany Parish. Additionally, NDRI is the facilitating organization for the "Epworth Project", a volunteer management effort that helps area homeowners in need of help with home repairs and maintenance – especially in the wake of natural disasters. Since its inception following Hurricane Katrina, the Epworth Project has recruited and hosted 53,000 volunteers from all 50 states and 43 countries around the world to assist more than 3,300 homeowners with unmet needs.

As such, my employing organization frequently solicits grants from funding organizations (typically United Way, American Red Cross, Catholic Charities, UMCOR and other global philanthropies to provide materials to rebuild homes for those impacted by disaster and living in long-term poverty as well as dealing with other personal vulnerabilities (elderly, veterans, disabled, single parents, etc.).

Although I do not anticipate the CAA Advisory Board to be in the position to provide grant money directly to NDRI for disaster recovery, or the converse of NDRI soliciting help from the CAA for disaster related funding, I want to be fully transparent and proactive in disclosing this possibility that my vocational position presents.

If the Advisory Board were ever put into the position to decide recipients of grant monies and my organization were to be a possible recipient, I would abstain from participation in discussions as well as casting a vote.

Respectfully submitted,



James R. "Jim" Fatic
Executive Director
Northshore Disaster Recovery Inc. / The Epworth Project
www.EpworthProject.com

DISCLOSURE OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST

2019 Calendar Year – Jim Fatic

I serve as the Executive Director for Northshore Disaster Recovery, Inc. ("NDRI", a Louisiana 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation that acts as the official, FEMA-recognized Long-term Recovery Organization (LTRO) for St Tammany Parish. Additionally, NDRI is the facilitating organization for the "Epworth Project", a volunteer management effort that helps area homeowners in need of help with home repairs and maintenance – especially in the wake of natural disasters. Since its inception following Hurricane Katrina, the Epworth Project has recruited and hosted more than 63,000 volunteers from all 50 states and 43 countries around the world to assist nearly 3,400 homeowners with unmet needs.

As such, my employing organization frequently solicits grants from funding organizations (typically United Way, American Red Cross, Catholic Charities, UMCOR and other global philanthropies to provide materials to rebuild homes for those impacted by disaster and living in long-term poverty as well as dealing with other personal vulnerabilities (elderly, veterans, disabled, single parents, etc.).

Although I do not anticipate the CAA Advisory Board to be in the position to provide grant money directly to NDRI for disaster recovery, or the converse of NDRI soliciting help from the CAA for disaster related funding, I want to be fully transparent and proactive in disclosing this possibility that my vocational position presents.

If the Advisory Board were ever put into the position to decide recipients of grant monies and my organization were to be a possible recipient, I would abstain from participation in discussions as well as casting a vote.

Respectfully submitted,



James R. "Jim" Fatic
Executive Director
Northshore Disaster Recovery Inc. / The Epworth Project
www.EpworthProject.com

DISCLOSURE OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST

2020 Calendar Year — Jim Fatic

I serve as the Executive Director for Northshore Disaster Recovery, Inc. ("NDRI", a Louisiana 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation that acts as the official, FEMA-recognized Long-term Recovery Organization (LTRO) for St Tammany Parish. Additionally, NDRI is the facilitating organization for the "Epworth Project", a volunteer management effort that helps area homeowners in need of help with home repairs and maintenance — especially in the wake of natural disasters. Since its inception following Hurricane Katrina, the Epworth Project has recruited and hosted almost 64,000 volunteers from all 50 states and 43 countries around the world to assist 3,400 homeowners with unmet needs.

As such, my employing organization frequently solicits grants from funding organizations (typically United Way, American Red Cross, Catholic Charities, UMCOR and other global philanthropies to provide materials to rebuild homes for those impacted by disaster and living in long-term poverty as well as dealing with other personal vulnerabilities (elderly, veterans, disabled, single parents, etc.).

Although I do not anticipate the CAA Advisory Board to be in the position to provide grant money directly to NDRI for disaster recovery, or the converse of NDRI soliciting help from the CAA for disaster related funding, I want to be fully transparent and proactive in disclosing this possibility that my vocational position presents.

If the Advisory Board were ever put into the position to decide recipients of grant monies and my organization were to be a possible recipient, I would abstain from participation in discussions as well as casting a vote.

Respectfully submitted,



James R. "Jim" Fatic
Executive Director
Northshore Disaster Recovery Inc. / The Epworth Project
www.EpworthProject.com

Ashley Wimberley

From: jim@epworthproject.com
Sent: Wednesday, April 14, 2021 2:23 PM
To: Ashley Wimberley
Subject: Late Fee Waiver Request - Jim Fatic
Attachments: WaiverRequest-JimFatic.pdf

EXTERNAL EMAIL: Please do not click on links or attachments unless you know the content is safe.

Hi, Ashley!

Attached is my request for consideration to reduce or waive the late fee for my personal financial disclosure in 2018.

Again, I would like to thank you so much for walking me through the process and helping me to get my filings up to date. Like I said, I wish that I the STP-CAA provided some sort of training for its new board members, because I feel like I was just tossed into the deep end! I greatly appreciate your helpful and cheerful disposition. It has been a pleasure working with you on this. That being said ...I hope to never have to go through it again!!!

Blessings,
Jim

Jim Fatic
Executive Director
Northshore Disaster Recovery, Inc. / The Epworth Project
www.EpworthProject.com
985-781-7990 - Office

